Muqtaṭafāt min Risālat al-ʿAlthī

Excerpts from the letter of al-ʿAlthī
and fawāʾid related to them.

By:

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Introduction

In the name of Allāh, and all praise is due to Allāh, and may blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allāh. To proceed:

This is a collection of excerpts from *"Naṣīḥat Abī al-Faḍl Isḥāq al-ʿAlthī ilā Abī al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī"*, a letter which Abū al-Faḍl Isḥāq ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ghānim al-ʿAlthī (d. 634h) wrote to Ibn al-Jawzī al-Ḥanbalī (d. 597h), advising him and criticising his methodology of performing *taʾwīl* instead of affirming the attributes as they have come.

Ibn Rajab said:

"313 - Isḥāq ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ghānim al-ʿAlthī, the ascetic exemplar, Abū al-Faḍl, and it is said Abū Muḥammad, cousin of Ṭalḥah ibn al-Muẓaffar, which was mentioned earlier. (...) He was a righteous exemplar, an ascetic, a jurist, a scholar, commanding good and forbidding evil. He feared none but Allāh, and no blamer's blame deterred him in Allāh's cause. He denounced the Caliph an-Nāṣir and those beneath him, confronted Caliph an-Nāṣir and spoke the truth to him bluntly. (...) He wrote many letters to notables denouncing them and advising them. I saw in his handwriting a letter he sent to the Caliph in Baghdād. He also sent a lengthy letter to Shaykh ʿAlī ibn Idrīs az-Zāhid, the disciple of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir, containing a denunciation of dancing (*raqṣ*) and musical audition (*samāʿ*) and an emphatic condemnation of it. He has several letters on this theme to various people. And he sent a lengthy letter to Shaykh Abū al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzī denouncing him for the inclination toward the people of *taʾwīl* found in his speech, in which he says: …"[1]

Then he mentioned the letter.

Click here to get the PDF form of the letter.

[1] Dhayl Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah, vol. 2, p. 205

Excerpt #1

Al-ʿAlthī said to Ibn al-Jawzī:

"وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكَ كَثْرَةُ اطِّلَاعِكَ عَلَى الْعُلُومِ، فَرُبَّ مُبَلِّغٍ أَوْعَى مِنْ سَامِعٍ، وَرُبَّ حَامِلِ فِقْهٍ لَا فِقْهَ لَهُ، وَرُبَّ بَحْرٍ كَدِرٍ وَنَهْرٍ صَافٍ، فَلَسْتَ بِأَعْلَمَ مِنَ الرَّسُولِ ﷺ حَيْثُ قَالَ لَهُ الْإِمَامُ عُمَرُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: «أَتُصَلِّي عَلَى ابْنِ أبي؟» فَأُنْزِلَ الْقُرْآنُ: (وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَىٰ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُم) [التوبة: ٨٤]. وَلَوْ كَانَ لَا يُنْكَرُ مِنْ قَلَّ عِلْمُهُ عَلَى مَنْ كَثُرَ عِلْمُهُ، إِذًا لَتَعَطَّلَ الْأَمْرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، وَصِرْنَا كَبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ حَيْثُ قَالَ تَعَالَى: (كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَن مُّنكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ) [المائدة: ٧٩]. بَلْ يُنْكَرُ الْمَفْضُولُ عَلَى الْفَاضِلِ، وَيُنْكَرُ الْفَاجِرُ عَلَى الْوَلِيِّ، عَلَى تَقْدِيرِ مَعْرِفَةِ الْوَلِيِّ."

"Let not the abundance of your knowledge of the sciences deceive you, for perhaps one who conveys [a message] is more understanding than one who hears [it], and perhaps one who carries fiqh has no understanding of it, and perhaps a sea is turbid while a river is clear. You are not more knowledgeable than the Messenger ﷺ, when Imām ʿUmar, may Allāh be pleased with him, said to him: "Do you pray over Ibn Ubayy (the hypocrite)?" The Qurʾān was then revealed: {And never pray over any of them}. [Qurʾān 9:84]
If it were not permissible for one of lesser knowledge to object to one of greater knowledge, then the command of enjoining good and forbidding evil would be nullified, and we would become like the Children of Isrāʾīl, about whom Allāh said: {They did not forbid one another from the evil they did}. [Qurʾān 5:79]
Rather, the lesser in rank may denounce the virtuous, and the sinner may denounce the walī, based upon the walī's degree of knowledge."[2]

[2] Naṣīḥat al-ʿAlthī, p. 6

Benefits related to the excerpt:

- A person shouldn't have pride because of their knowledge, and they shouldn't reject advice because of their vast knowledge.
- A person can have vast knowledge that doesn't benefit them, either because they don't act upon it or because they lack sincerity.
- A person isn't judged by their knowledge but rather by their *ittibāʿ* of the right path.
- True knowledge is not in memorising texts, but in grasping meaning and living by it.
- Commanding good and forbidding evil is a must for every Muslim. Even if they sin or lack knowledge, otherwise, no one will have the authority to command good and forbid evil, because no one is infallible or possesses the knowledge of everything.
- The principle ‘don't criticise the scholars’ is false.
- Someone with less knowledge can be correct on a matter, while someone with more knowledge can be wrong on it.
- Someone with less knowledge can criticise someone with more knowledge than him, and there is nothing wrong with that as long as he is correct.

Excerpt #2

Al-ʿAlthī said to Ibn al-Jawzī:

"واعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ قَدْ كَثُرَ النَّكِيرُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ الْعُلَمَاءِ وَالْفُضَلَاءِ وَالْأَخْيَارِ فِي الْآفَاقِ بِمَقَالَتِكَ الْفَاسِدَةِ فِي الصِّفَاتِ، وَقَدْ أَبَانُوا وَهَاءَ مَقَالَتِكَ وَحَكَوْا عَنْكَ أَنَّكَ أَبَيْتَ النَّصِيحَةَ، فَعِنْدَكَ مِنَ الْأَقْوَالِ الَّتِي لَا تَلِيقُ بِالسُّنَّةِ مَا يَضِيقُ الْوَقْتُ عَنْ ذِكْرِهَا."

"And know that condemnation against you has increased from the scholars, the virtuous people, and the righteous throughout the lands because of your corrupt statement regarding the attributes. They have made clear the weakness of your statement and have reported that you refused advice. You possess sayings so unbecoming of the Sunnah that there is not enough time to mention them all."[3]

[3] Naṣīḥat al-ʿAlthī, p. 7

Benefits related to the excerpt:

- Condemning innovators and warning from them is a must for scholars so that laymen don't get misguided.
- Ibn al-Jawzī was criticised by the scholars of his time, even though he authored many books and had vast knowledge. This indicates that knowledge isn't a preventative of criticism.
- The scholars have advised Ibn al-Jawzī, yet he refused the advice and was stubborn. So was the *ḥujjah* established on him or not…?

Excerpt #3

Al-ʿAlthī said to Ibn al-Jawzī:

"ثُمَّ تَعَرَّضْتَ لِصِفَاتِ الْخَالِقِ تَعَالَى، كَأَنَّهَا صَدَرَتْ لَا مِنْ صَدْرٍ سَكَنَ فِيهِ احْتِشَامُ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ، وَلَا أَمْلَاهَا قَلْبٌ مَلِيءٌ بِالْهَيْبَةِ وَالتَّعْظِيمِ، بَلْ مِنْ وَاقِعَاتِ النُّفُوسِ الْبَهْرَجِيَّةِ الزِّيُوفِ، وَزَعَمْتَ أَنَّ طَائِفَةً مِنْ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ وَالْأَخْيَارِ تَلَقَّوْهَا وَمَا فَهِمُوا، وَحَاشَاهُمْ مِنْ ذَلِكَ، بَلْ كَفُّوا عَنِ الثَّرْثَرَةِ وَالتَّشَدُّقِ، لَا عَجْزًا - بِحَمْدِ اللَّهِ - عَنِ الْجِدَالِ وَالْخِصَامِ، وَلَا جَهْلًا بِطُرُقِ الْكَلَامِ، وَإِنَّمَا أَمْسَكُوا عَنِ الْخَوْضِ فِي ذَلِكَ عَنْ عِلْمٍ وَدِرَايَةٍ، لَا عَنْ جَهْلٍ وَعَمَايَةٍ.
وَالْعَجَبُ مِمَّنْ يَنْتَحِلُ مَذْهَبَ السَّلَفِ، وَلَا يَرَى الْخَوْضَ فِي الْكَلَامِ، ثُمَّ يُقْدِمُ عَلَى تَفْسِيرِ مَا لَمْ يَرَهُ أَوَّلًا، وَيَقُولُ: إِذَا قُلْنَا كَذَا أَدَّى إِلَى كَذَا، وَيُقِيسُ مَا ثَبَتَ مِنْ صِفَاتِ الْخَالِقِ عَلَى مَا لَمْ يَثْبُتْ عِنْدَهُ.
فَهَذَا الَّذِي نَهَيْتُ عَنْهُ، وَكَيْفَ تَنْقُضُ عَهْدَكَ وَقَوْلَكَ بِقَوْلِ فُلَانٍ وَفُلَانٍ مِنَ الْمُتَأَخِّرِينَ؟
(...) فَكَيْفَ يَجُوزُ أَنْ تَتَّبِعَ الْمُتَكَلِّمِينَ فِي آرَائِهِمْ، وَتَخُوضَ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ فِيمَا خَاضُوا فِيهِ، ثُمَّ تُنْكِرَ عَلَيْهِمْ ؟
هَذَا مِنَ الْعَجَبِ الْعَجِيبِ؟! وَلَوْ أَنَّ مَخْلُوقًا وَصَفَ مَخْلُوقًا مِثْلَهُ بِصِفَاتٍ مِنْ غَيْرِ رُؤْيَةٍ وَلَا خَبَرِ صَادِقٍ لَكَانَ كَاذِبًا فِي إِخْبَارِهِ. فَكَيْفَ تَصِفُونَ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَهُ بِشَيْءٍ مَا وَقَفْتُمْ عَلَى صِحَّتِهِ، بَلْ بِالظُّنُونِ وَالْوَاقِعَاتِ، وَتَنْفُونَ الصِّفَاتِ الَّتِي رَضِيَهَا لِنَفْسِهِ، وَأَخْبَرَ بِهَا رَسُولُهُ بِنَقْلِ الثِّقَاتِ الْأَثْبَاتِ، بِيُحْتَمَلُ وَيُحْتَمَلُ؟!
ثُمَّ لَكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَسْمَيْتَهُ: «الْكَشْفَ لِمُشْكِلِ الصَّحِيحَيْنِ» مَقَالَاتٌ عَجِيبَةٌ، تَارَةً تَحْكِيهَا عَنِ الْخَطَّابِيِّ وَغَيْرِهِ مِنَ الْمُتَأَخِّرِينَ. أَطَّلَعَ هَؤُلَاءِ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ؟! وَأَنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ: لَا يَجُوزُ التَّقْلِيدُ فِي هَذَا، ثُمَّ ذِكْرُهُ فُلَانٌ، ذِكْرُهُ ابْنُ عَقِيلٍ، فَنُرِيدُ الدَّلِيلَ مِنَ الذَّاكِرِ أَيْضًا، فَهُوَ مُجَرَّدُ دَعْوَى. وَلَيْسَ الْكَلَامُ فِي اللَّهِ وَصِفَاتِهِ بِالْهَيِّنِ لِيُلْقَى إِلَى مَجَارِي الظُّنُونِ."

"Then you ventured into the attributes of the Creator, Exalted is He, as if they issued not from a breast filled with reverence for the Most High, the Most Great, nor were they dictated by a heart full of awe and veneration. Rather, they came from the fanciful illusions of deceptive souls. And you claimed that a group of the people of the Sunnah and the righteous received them without understanding, far be they from that! Rather, they refrained from idle chatter and pretentious speech, not, praise be to Allāh, out of incapacity for debate and dispute, nor out of ignorance of the methods of kalām. Rather, they abstained from delving into that out of knowledge and insight, not out of ignorance and blindness.
And it is astonishing that one who claims adherence to the madhhab of the Salaf and rejects delving into kalām then proceeds to interpret what he did not initially acknowledge, and says: "If we say such-and-such, it leads to such-and-such," and he analogises what is established from the attributes of the Creator to what is not established in his view.
This is what you were forbidden from. And how can you break your covenant and your own statement by following the sayings of so-and-so and so-and-so from the mutaʾakhkhirīn?
(...) So how can it be permissible for you to follow the Mutakallimīn in their opinions, and plunge with those who plunge into what they plunged into, and then denounce them?
This is among the most astonishing wonders?!

If a created being were to describe another created being like himself with certain attributes without having seen him or without truthful information, he would be a liar in his report. So how can you describe Allāh, glorified is He, with something whose truthfulness you have not verified, rather, based on conjectures and assumptions, while you deny the attributes that He has approved for Himself and informed His Messenger ﷺ about through the transmission of trustworthy, reliable narrators, [dismissing them with] "it is possible that and it is possible that"?!

Furthermore, in the book you titled "Al-Kashf li-Mushkil aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn", you have astonishing statements, sometimes attributing them to al-Khaṭṭābī[4] and other mutaʾakhkhirīn. Did these people have knowledge of the unseen?! And you yourselves say: "It is not permissible to follow others blindly in this matter." Then [you say] "So-and-so mentioned it, Ibn ʿAqīl[5] mentioned it", so we want proof from the one mentioning it as well, for it is merely a claim. And discourse concerning Allāh and His attributes is not a trivial matter to be cast into the channels of conjecture."[6]

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[4] Abū Sulaymān, Ḥamd ibn Muḥammad al-Khaṭṭābī al-Bustī (d. 388h), an Ashʿarī Shāfiʿī scholar.
[5] Abū al-Wafāʾ, ʿAlī ibn ʿAqīl al-Baghdādī (d. 513h), a Ḥanbalī scholar.
[6] Naṣīḥat al-ʿAlthī, p. 8-9

Benefits related to the excerpt:

- The person should have awe when the attributes of Allāh are brought up.
- The methodology of the Salaf is not to delve into the attributes of Allāh without knowledge and to accept them as they have come. This doesn't imply that they didn't understand them. Rather, their silence was out of knowledge and understanding, for they knew that delving into this matter brings no benefit and that the safety of the religion lies in remaining silent about what the Book and the Sunnah have remained silent on.
- When Allāh describes Himself with attributes, who is the Jahmī to come and say that the apparent meanings of the texts don't befit Allāh?
- The Jahmiyyah don't have respect for the attributes of Allāh, and they base their beliefs upon speculation, not firm evidence, and they use *qiyās al-ghāʾib ʿalā ash-shāhid* (i.e. they compare what is unseen to what is present, they compare the attributes of Allāh to the attributes of the creation) to deny them.
- Regarding the description of the created being, they require either direct observation or an authentic report; otherwise, the description is deemed false. But regarding the description of the Creator, they describe Him with conjectures and assumptions without evidence, and they deny what Allāh Himself has affirmed, using 'it is possible that'. See the explanations of the Jahmiyyah for any verse or narration regarding the attributes; they cite multiple possible interpretations, all based upon conjecture. How is it that describing a created being with conjecture is a lie, but describing the Creator with conjecture through their interpretations is considered a correct methodology? How is certainty required in the knowledge about the created being, yet possibility is sufficient regarding the knowledge the Creator gives about Himself?
- The Jahmiyyah quote their scholars' interpretations as if they know the unseen, while all of it is based upon assumptions. When a Jahmī argues against you with the interpretation of his scholar, then ask him to bring you evidence that his scholar's interpretation is valid. He wouldn't be able to. It is hilarious how they present their interpretations as if they were unquestionable facts.
- Someone who criticises a certain group and then ends up agreeing with it gets judged like they were judged. If a person, for example, criticised the Ashāʿirah, then ended up agreeing with them in Kalām Nafsī. They are

judged to be a disbeliever just like them; not being attributed to them doesn't change the ruling.

- Ibn al-Jawzī was performing *taqlīd* of certain individuals from the *mutaʾakhkhirīn,* yet he was still criticised. (An-Nawawī was mostly copying and pasting from al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ).

Excerpt #4

Al-ʿAlthī said to Ibn al-Jawzī:

"وَتَقُولُ: قَدِ انْزَعَجَ الْخَطَّابِيُّ لِهَذِهِ الْأَلْفَاظِ!
فَمَا الَّذِي أَزْعَجَهُ دُونَ غَيْرِهِ؟!
وَنَرَاكَ تَبْنِي شَيْئًا ثُمَّ تَنْقُضُهُ، وَتَقُولُ: قَدْ قَالَ فُلَانٌ وَفُلَانٌ، وَتَنْسِبُ ذَلِكَ إِلَى إِمَامِنَا أَحْمَدَ. وَاللَّهُ! مَذْهَبُهُ مَعْرُوفٌ فِي السُّكُوتِ عَنْ مِثْلِ هَذَا، وَلَا يُفَسِّرُهُ، بَلْ صَحَّحَ الْحَدِيثَ، وَمَنَعَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِهِ."

"And you say: "Al-Khaṭṭābī was disturbed by these wordings!"
So what disturbed him that did not disturb others?!
And we see you building something then demolishing it, and say: "So-and-so and so-and-so said", and attribute that to our Imām Aḥmad, may Allāh be pleased with him. And his madhhab is well-known regarding remaining silent about such matters (the attributes), and he does not interpret it, but rather he authenticated the ḥadīth and prohibited its taʾwīl."[7]

[7] Naṣīḥat al-ʿAlthī, p. 10

Benefits related to the excerpt:

- No one should care about the opinion of some Jahmī.
- Adh-Dhahabī said: "**And he (ʿAbdullāh ibn Aḥmad) also narrated it on the authority of his father, Wakīʿ narrated to us the narration of Isrāʾīl, on the authority of Abū Isḥāq, on the authority of ʿAbdullāh ibn Khalīfah, on the authority of ʿUmar, [he said]: "When the Lord, Mighty and Majestic, sits on the Throne…", Then a man, whom my father named, shuddered in front of Wakīʿ, so Wakīʿ became angry and said: "We witnessed al-Aʿmash and Sufyān narrating these narrations and they did not reject them." (...) So if those Imāms: Abū Isḥāq as-Sabīʿī, ath-Thawrī, al-Aʿmash, Isrāʾīl, ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī, Abū Aḥmad az-Zubayrī, Wakīʿ, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and other than them, who are too numerous to list, who are the stars of guidance and the lamps in darkness, have accepted this narration, narrated it, and neither rejected it nor criticised its chain, then who are we to reject it or assume we know better than them? Rather, we accept it and entrust its knowledge to Allāh, the Almighty.**"[8]
- We see many Jahmiyyah quote Ibn al-Jawzī, and this is a testimony that the methodology of Imām Aḥmad has nothing to do with what Ibn al-Jawzī attributes to him. And we will stumble once again upon al-ʿAlthī freeing the Imām from Ibn al-Jawzī later on.
- Some Jahmiyyah claim that the Ḥanābilah before Ibn Taymiyyah didn't perform *ithbāt,* and this is a lie. We will expand on this later.

[8] Kitāb al-ʿArsh, vol. 2, p. 154-156

Excerpt #5

Al-ʿAlthī said to Ibn al-Jawzī:

"وَتَدَّعِي أَنَّ الْأَصْحَابَ خَلَطُوا فِي الصِّفَاتِ! فَقَدْ قَبَحْتَ أَكْثَرَ مِنْهُمْ، وَمَا وَسِعَتْكَ السُّنَّةُ.
فَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَهُ، وَلَا تَتَكَلَّمُ فِيهِ بِرَأْيِكَ؛ فَهَذَا خَبَرُ غَيْبٍ، لَا يُسْمَعُ إِلَّا مِنَ الرَّسُولِ الْمَعْصُومِ. فَقَدْ نُصِبْتُمْ حَرْبًا لِلْأَحَادِيثِ الصَّحِيحَةِ، وَالَّذِينَ نَقَلُوهَا نَقَلُوا شَرَائِعَ الْإِسْلَامِ."

"And you claim that the companions (i.e. the Ḥanābilah) were confused about the attributes! Indeed, you have spoken more offensively than they ever did, and the Sunnah has not sufficed you.
So fear Allāh, Exalted be He, and do not speak about this matter based on your own opinion, for this is knowledge of the unseen, which is only heard from the infallible Messenger. You have been set up in opposition to the authentic ḥadīths, yet those who transmitted them are the very ones who conveyed to us the laws of Islām."[9]

[9] Naṣīḥat al-ʿAlthī, p. 10-11

Benefits related to the excerpt:

- The claim that the Ḥanābilah were confused about the attributes is a lie. Rather, they all shared a common methodology, which was *ithbāt*, except for some late ones who were influenced by *kalām.* Aḥmad and his relatives like ʿAbdullāh, Ḥanbal and others, and his students who transmitted *fiqh* and ḥadīth from him like Abū Dāwūd, al-Marrūdhī, al-Athram, al-Kawsaj, al-Warrāq and others, and their students like al-Khallāl, Ḥarb and the early Ḥanābilah like Ghulām al-Khallāl, Ibn Baṭṭah, Ibn Mandah, Ibn Shāqillā, al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥāmid and others, all were upon the belief of the Salaf. Until some differed and followed the path of the Kullābiyyah like the Tamīmīs (Abū al-Ḥasan, his son Abū al-Faḍl and his grandson Rizqullāh) and Ibn az-Zāghūnī.
  Abū Yaʿlā innovated a new methodology which combined the foundations of the Mutakallimīn and the speech of Aḥmad and his companions. And some of them, like Ibn ʿAqīl, leaned to the methodology of the Muʿtazilah, but he repented.
- The attributes of Allāh are affirmed through *naql,* not opinion, analogy or *ijtihād*. The companions, of course, knew that the attributes of Allāh are from the unseen. Therefore, any *mawqūf* narration takes the ruling of a *marfūʿ* narration.
- Those who transmitted the narrations regarding *ʿaqīdah* are the same people who transmitted the narrations regarding *aḥkām*; if you reject the former, then you have to reject the latter. The Jahmiyyah reject singular narrations in *ʿaqīdah* but accept them in *fiqh*. All of this opens a door to criticising the Sunnah.
- ʿAbdullāh ibn Aḥmad narrated, he said: Abū Maʿmar narrated to me, he said: ʿAbbād ibn al-ʿAwwām narrated to us, he said: "Sharīk came to us, and we asked him about the narration: 'Indeed, Allāh descends on the night of the middle of Shaʿbān.' We said: "Some people reject these narrations." He said: "What do they say?" We said: "They criticise them." So he said: "Indeed, those who brought us these narrations are the same ones who brought us the Qurʿān, and that the [daily] prayers are five, and the pilgrimage to the House, and fasting in Ramaḍān. We only know Allāh through these narrations."[10]

[10] Kitāb as-Sunnah, n° 508

Excerpt #6

Al-ʿAlthī said:

"وَابْنُ عَقِيلٍ سَامَحَهُ اللَّهُ، قَدْ حُكِيَ عَنْهُ: أَنَّهُ تَابَ بِمَحْضَرٍ مِنْ عُلَمَاءِ وَقْتِهِ مِنْ مِثْلِ هَذِهِ الْأَقْوَالِ، بِمَدِينَةِ السَّلَامِ - عَمَّرَهَا اللَّهُ بِالْإِسْلَامِ وَالسُّنَّةِ - فَهُوَ بَرِيءٌ - عَلَى هَذَا التَّقْدِيرِ - مِمَّا يُوجَدُ بِخَطِّهِ، أَوْ يُنْسَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنَ التَّأْوِيلَاتِ، وَالْأَقْوَالِ الْمُخَالِفَةِ لِلْكِتَابِ وَالسُّنَّةِ."

"And as for Ibn ʿAqīl, may Allāh forgive him, then it has been reported from him that he repented in the presence of the scholars of his time from such statements, in the City of Peace (Baghdād), may Allāh perpetuate it with Islām and the Sunnah. Therefore, according to this account, he is absolved of whatever is found in his handwriting or attributed to him of taʾwīlāt and statements that contradict the Book and the Sunnah."[11]

[11] Naṣīḥat al-ʿAlthī, p. 11

Benefits related to the excerpt:

- Repentance should be public for the one whose innovation was known.
- The Jahmiyyah keep quoting Ibn ʿAqīl even though he repented from his beliefs, and he wrote a letter repenting from his past beliefs and actions. Among those who mentioned it:

1. Ibn al-Jawzī in *"Al-Muntaẓam fī Tārīkh al-Mulūk wal-Umam"*.[12]
2. Ibn Qudāmah in *"Taḥrīm an-Naẓar fī Kutub al-Kalām"*.[13]
3. Ibn Rajab in *"Dhayl Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah"*.[14]

   And from what he wrote: **"In the name of Allāh, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate. ʿAlī ibn ʿAqīl ibn Muḥammad says: I declare my disavowal before Allāh, the Exalted, from the doctrines of the innovators, the Muʿtazilah and others, and from the company of their adherents, the veneration of their followers, mercy upon their predecessors, and association with their successors. Whatever I had written, and whatever of my handwriting was found containing their doctrines or misguidances, I repent to Allāh, the Exalted, for having written it. It is not permissible to write, read, or believe such things. (...) I also believed that al-Ḥallāj was among the people of religion, asceticism, and miracles, and I defended that in a treatise I wrote. I repent to Allāh, the Exalted, for that. He was executed by the consensus of the jurists of his time. They were right, and he was wrong. Moreover, I seek forgiveness from Allāh and repent to Him for mixing with the innovators and the Muʿtazilah and others, for associating with them, showing mercy to them, and honouring them. For all of that is forbidden, and it is not permissible for any Muslim to do so. For the Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever honours an innovator has aided in the destruction of Islām."[15] Ash-Sharīf Abū Jaʿfar and the shuyūkh and followers with him, my masters and brothers, may Allāh protect them, were right in denouncing me when they saw my handwriting in those books from which I disavow myself before Allāh. I affirm that I wrote them in error and without correctness. And if anything contrary to this declaration or acknowledgement is ever found from me, then the Imām of the Muslims has the right to discipline and punish me as the Sharīʿah requires, by**

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[12] ibid., vol. 16, p. 143
[13] ibid., p. 33
[14] ibid., vol. 144, p. 144
[15] I said: This isn't authentic from the Prophet ﷺ rather it is from the words of some of the Salaf but the meaning is correct.

reprimand, punishment, exile, or otherwise. I have testified before Allāh, His angels, and the people of knowledge regarding this, without compulsion or coercion, and Allāh knows that my inner and outer states are the same in this matter. Allāh the Exalted says: {And whoever returns, Allāh will take retribution against him; and Allāh is Mighty, Owner of Retribution.} [Qurʾān 5:95]
Written on Wednesday, the tenth of Muḥarram, in the year 465h."

Excerpt #7

Al-ʿAlthī said to Ibn al-Jawzī:

"وَإِذَا تَأَوَّلْتَ الصِّفَاتِ عَلَى اللُّغَةِ، وَسَوَّغْتَهُ لِنَفْسِكَ، وَأَبَيْتَ النَّصِيحَةَ، فَلَيْسَ هُوَ مَذْهَبَ الإِمَامِ الْكَبِيرِ أَحْمَدِ بْنِ حَنْبَلٍ قَدَّسَ اللَّهُ رُوحَهُ، فَلَا يُمْكِنُكَ الِانْتِسَابُ إِلَيْهِ بِهَذَا. فَاخْتَرْ لِنَفْسِكَ مَذْهَبًا إِنْ مَكَّنْتَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ. وَمَا زَالَ أَصْحَابُنَا يَجْهَرُونَ بِصَرِيحِ الْحَقِّ فِي كُلِّ وَقْتٍ، وَلَوْ ضُرِبُوا بِالسُّيُوفِ، لَا يَخَافُونَ فِي اللَّهِ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ، وَلَا يُبَالُونَ بِشَنَاعَةِ مُشْنِعٍ، وَلَا كَذِبِ كَاذِبٍ. وَلَهُمْ مِنَ الِاسْمِ الْعَذْبِ الْهَنِيِّ، وَتَرْكِهِمُ الدُّنْيَا وَإِعْرَاضِهِمْ عَنْهَا اشْتِغَالًا بِالْآخِرَةِ، مَا هُوَ مَعْلُومٌ مَعْرُوفٌ."

"And if you interpret the attributes based on language, justify this to yourself, and reject advice, then this is not the methodology of the great Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, may Allāh sanctify his soul. You cannot claim affiliation to him with this. So choose a madhhab for yourself if you are able to do so. Our companions (i.e. the Ḥanābilah) have always proclaimed the clear truth at all times, even if they were to be struck with swords. They do not fear, for the sake of Allāh, the blame of any blamer, nor do they care about the slander of any slanderer or the lies of any liar. They possess a sweet, agreeable reputation, and their abandonment of this worldly life and turning away from it, busying themselves with the Hereafter, is something well-known and recognised."[16]

[16] Naṣīḥat al-ʿAlthī, p. 12

Benefits related to the excerpt:

- Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal is free from *taʾwīl,* and whoever performs *taʾwīl* and still clings to the *madhhab* of Aḥmad should look for another *madhhab*.
- The way Al-ʿAlthī described the Ḥanābilah reminds me of how al-Ḥasan described ʿUmar, may Allāh be pleased with him: "By Allāh, he was not the first of them to embrace Islām, nor the most generous of them in spending in the way of Allāh, but he overcame people by his asceticism (zuhd) in worldly life, his firmness in the commands of Allāh, and his fearlessness of the blame of any blamer for the sake of Allāh."[17]
- Ibn Rajab transmitted from Ibn ʿAqīl that he said: **"What predominates among the younger members of the followers of Aḥmad is chastity, and among their elders is asceticism and cleanliness."**[18]
  The Ḥanābilah were known for Zuhd, for example: Sahl at-Tustarī[19], al-Barbahārī, al-Ājurrī, Ibn Baṭṭah, Yaḥyā ibn ʿAmmār[20], Abū Ismāʿīl al-Harawī… and the list goes on. Unlike the Jahmiyyah, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī used to pray without performing *wuḍūʾ*,[21] al-Bāqillānī used to wear a *niqāb*[22] so that Abū Ḥāmid wouldn't catch him, and al-Āmidī used to abandon prayer.[23]

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[17] Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah, n° 34455
[18] Dhayl Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah, vol. 1, p. 144
[19] Abū Muḥammad, Sahl ibn ʿAbdillāh at-Tustarī (d. 283h), he was one of the Shuyūkh of the Ṣūfiyyah, upon the Sunnah.
[20] Abū Zakariyyā, Yaḥyā ibn ʿAmmār as-Sijistānī (d. 422h), he was the Imām of Harāt at his time.
[21] Al-Harawī reported: I heard Yaḥyā ibn ʿAmmār say: I heard Zāhir ibn Aḥmad, and he was an Imām for the Muslims, say: "I was looking into a door opening, and I saw Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī urinating into the sewer. Then I entered upon him, and when the time for prayer came, he stood up to pray without having cleansed himself, without wiping, and without performing *wuḍūʾ*. So I mentioned *wuḍūʾ* to him, and he replied: "I am not in a state of impurity.""
I heard Manṣūr ibn Ismāʿīl al-Faqīh say: I heard Zāhir say: "I traced a circle with ink on the sole of al-Ashʿarī's foot while he was resting, and after six [days], I still saw the mark, and he had not washed it!"
See Dhamm al-Kalām, vol. 5, p. 77-78.
[22] Ibn Taymiyyah transmitted from Abū al-Ḥasan al-Karajī's "Al-Fuṣūl ʿan al-Aʾimmah al-Fuḥūl": I heard the jurist and Imām Abū Manṣūr Saʿd ibn ʿAlī al-ʿAjlī say: I heard several mashāyikh and aʾimmah in Baghdād, I think Shaykh Abū Isḥāq ash-Shīrāzī was among them, say: "Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī used to go out to the public bathhouse veiled, out of fear of Shaykh Abū Ḥāmid al-Isfarāyinī."
See Darʾ Taʿāruḍ al-ʿAql wa an-Naql, vol. 2, p. 98.
[23] Adh-Dhahabī said: "As-Sayf al-Āmidī, the Mutakallim, the author of works, ʿAlī ibn Abī ʿAlī. He was banished from Damascus due to the corruption of his beliefs, and it has been authentic from him that he used to abandon the prayer. We ask Allāh for well-being."
See Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl, vol. 2, p. 259.

Excerpt #8

Al-ʿAlthī said to Ibn al-Jawzī:

"وَلَقَدْ سَوَّدْتَ وُجُوهَنَا بِمَقَالَتِكَ الْفَاسِدَةِ، وَانْفِرَادِكَ بِنَفْسِكَ كَأَنَّكَ جَبَّارٌ مِنَ الْجَبَابِرَةِ. وَلَا كَرَامَةَ لَكَ وَلَا نُعْمَى، وَلَا تُمَكِّنُكَ مِنَ الْجَهْرِ بِمُخَالَفَةِ السُّنَّةِ، وَلَوِ اسْتَقْبَلَ مِنَ الرَّأْيِ مَا اسْتَدْبَرَ لَمْ يُحَمِّلْكَ عَنْكَ كَلَامٌ فِي السَّهْلِ وَلَا فِي الْجَبَلِ. وَلَكِنْ قَدَرُ اللَّهِ، وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ. بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَسُنَّةُ رَسُولِهِ. قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: {فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ} [النساء: ٥٩]، وَلَمْ يَقُلْ: إِلَى ابْنِ الْجَوْزِيِّ.
وَتَرَى كُلَّ مَنْ أَنْكَرَ عَلَيْكَ نِسْبَتَهُ إِلَى الْجَهْلِ، فَفَضْلُ اللَّهِ أُوتِيتَهُ وَحْدَكَ؟! وَإِذَا جَهِلْتَ النَّاسَ فَمَنْ يَشْهَدُ لَكَ أَنَّكَ عَالِمٌ؟ وَمَنْ أَجْهَلُ مِنْكَ، حَيْثُ لَا تُصْغِي إِلَى نَصِيحَةِ نَاصِحٍ؟ وَتَقُولُ: مَنْ كَانَ فُلَانٌ، وَمَنْ كَانَ فُلَانٌ؟ مِنَ الْأَئِمَّةِ الَّذِينَ وَصَلَ الْعِلْمُ إِلَيْكَ عَنْهُمْ، مَنْ أَنْتَ إِذًا؟ فَلَقَدِ اسْتَرَاحَ مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ، وَأَحْجَمَ عَنِ الْخَوْضِ فِيمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ، لِئَلَّا يَنْدَمَ. فَانْتَبِهْ يَا مِسْكِينُ قَبْلَ الْمَمَاتِ، وَحَسِّنِ الْقَوْلَ وَالْعَمَلَ، فَقَدْ قَرُبَ الْأَجَلُ.
لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ، وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ."

"You have truly blackened our faces with your corrupt statement and your isolation of yourself, as if you were a tyrant among tyrants. You have no honour nor favour, and you will not be enabled to openly oppose the Sunnah. Had reason been before you as it is now behind you, no one, whether in the plains or the mountains, would have borne from you a single word. But Allāh decreed, and He does whatever He wills. Between us and you are the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ. Allāh the Exalted said: {If you disagree over anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger} [Qurʾān 4:59], and He did not say: "Refer it to Ibn al-Jawzī."
And you see that everyone who condemns you, you attribute to ignorance. Have you been given Allāh's favour alone?! If you consider the people ignorant, then who testifies that you are knowledgeable? Who is more ignorant than you, when you do not listen to the advice of an adviser? And you say: "Who was so-and-so, who was so-and-so?" [referring to] the Imāms from whom knowledge reached you. Who are you then? Indeed, he who fears the standing before his Lord finds rest, and he who refrains from delving into what he does not know lest he regret. So be careful, O wretched one, before death, and rectify your speech and action, for the term is near.
To Allāh belongs the command, before and after. And there is no power nor strength except with Allāh, the Most High, the Most Great."[24]

[24] Naṣīḥat al-ʿAlthī, p. 12-13

Benefits related to the excerpt:

- Ahl as-Sunnah should confront their opposers with sound arguments, rebuke, and reminders of Allāh and death. Harsh language may be used when advising so that the advised knows the weight of his action.
- When people differ, then the revelation is the judge, not the speech of so-and-so and so-and-so, even if they had a high rank.
- We can conclude that Ibn al-Jawzī was arrogant, refused the truth, claimed knowledge and attributed anyone who opposed him to ignorance. And this is the state of most of the callers to innovation and disbelief. And Allāh is the one whose help is sought.
- The person should fear his Lord and not let arrogance and pride overtake him when proof is shown to him, and advice is given to him. Faults should be acknowledged. A Muslim should always return to the revelation, abandon *taʿaṣṣub* (fanaticism), accept sincere advice, and fear Allāh before it is too late.

هذا والحمد لله أولا وآخرا ظاهرا وباطنا وصلى الله على نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين.